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Of Terrorism & Heroism

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 Special to The Washington Post

The book may be a thriller, but when you're a senator you don't talk about plot twists, you talk about good and evil.

"Must democracy be sacrificed, or at least compromised, in order to protect it?" asked Sen. William S. Cohen (R-Maine). "The Double Man" is essentially about the conflict between good and evil. We chose to explore this conflict through the subject of international terrorism."

Cohen and Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.), authors of "The Double Man," were the first speakers at yesterday's Washington Post spring Book and Author Luncheon, held at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. Leonard Downie, managing editor of The Post, presided.

Hart began by saying, "I would be less than honest if I didn't say this book started off as a lark." But, he added, "We consider this a serious effort."

Hart said that he hopes the book will "stimulate concern" and "force thoughtful people to think about what happens when so-called dirty tricks and covert action begin to backfire . . . Such activities are not cost-free . . . As we escalate the arms race, we increase the barriers."

Tom Clancy, author of "The Hunt for Red October," also had international terrorism on his mind when he decided to write a book. Based on a true incident, "Red October" depicts a Russian, trying to defect to Sweden in a Soviet supersubmarine, who is chased by the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously.

An insurance writer by profession, Clancy charmed the audience of 750. "I wrote the book for fun, without really thinking of making money," he said. He sent the draft of "Red October" to the Naval Institute Press, known for publishing technical naval literature. They had never before published a novel, but Clancy knew they were looking for fiction.

He said that he wrote the book for two reasons. "I wanted to see my name on the

cover of a book—that's been a dream since high school. And I wanted to tell the truth." The people who operate submarines, he said, "work long hours for little pay. They do this out of a sense of duty. I wanted to tell their story."

When asked where he got his information about Soviet submarines, Clancy replied, "The only source of classified information I have is The Washington Post. And it's turned out to be a pretty good one."

Author Gary Sick's story of terrorism was far from fictional. In his book, "All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran," Sick writes of the hostage crisis as he saw it from his position as White House Iran specialist during the Carter administration. "My book is the one without the mole in the Kremlin—unfortunately," said Sick, explaining that America doesn't always have the intelligence it needs. "In some sense, I was the mole. I felt an extraordinary obligation to let people know what that felt like."

It is the sixth anniversary of the Iranian revolution, and Sick said, "It's a subject that still grips people. People want to understand what happened and, of course, so do I." He said the luncheon was especially important to him because he first "got his hands" on a published copy of the book yesterday.

George Stevens Jr., the last speaker, discussed "Victory in Europe," a pictorial documentary of the second world war. Published in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of V-E Day, the book features color photographs taken by his father, the late George Stevens, during his military service. George Stevens Jr., who wrote the introduction to the book, learned that his father's film "was virtually the only color film made of World War II." The book combines enlarged color prints made from the film with commentary by British war correspondent Max Hastings.

Stevens said the book is dedicated to the special unit that worked with his father. "I'm happy that this book will be a small remembrance to those men who fought a just war."